

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, and 5 are pending in the present application. Claims 4 and 6-11 have been canceled. Claims 1 stands rejected and claims 3 and 5 stand objected to. Claims 1, 3 and 5 are herein amended.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that the subject matter of claims 3, 5 and 6 have been objected to but indicated as allowable. Claims 3 and 5 have been amended to make into a better form without changing the subject matter. Claim 6 has been canceled because the recitation has been incorporated in claims 3 and 5.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite.

Claims 7 and 8 have been canceled. Therefore, the rejection to these claims has become moot.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 4, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Akeyoshi et al.

Claims 4, 7 and 8 have been canceled. Therefore, the rejection to these claims has become moot.

Claims 1, 2, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Matsui.

The present application is a national stage of an international application, and the effective filing date of the international application is February 9, 1998. Matsui was published on August 31, 1999, which is later than the international filing date of this application. Moreover, even the filing date of Matsui in Japan was February 23, 1998, which is still later than the international filing date of this application. Thus, Matsui is not prior art.

Therefore, claims 1 and 2 are patentable over Matsui.

Also, claims 7 and 8 have been canceled. Therefore, the rejection to claims 7 and 8 has become moot.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicant submits that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicant requests such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.111
Application No. 09/601,684
Reply to Office Action dated March 26, 2004

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sadao Kinashi".

Sadao Kinashi
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 48,075

SK/fs
1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 822-1100

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